

June 3, 2013

Rep. Gail Haines, Committee Chair
House Health Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 49809

Senate Bill 92

Dear Chairperson Haines and Committee Members:

My name is Cindy Baumann and I am writing to you today in regards to Senate Bill 92. I have been a Pharmacy Technician at a locally owned pharmacy in Holland for the past 32 years. There are portions of Senate Bill 92 that will negatively affect my employment, as well as that of others all across the state. This bill will require that all Pharmacy Technicians be licensed through the State of Michigan. In order to be licensed, the licensee must pass a state certified examination and pay the licensing fees. There is, however, an exception to this requirement: if the licensee is currently working as a Technician at a pharmacy, and has worked a total of 1000 hours in the last 12 months, she can be grandfathered in, receiving the license without taking the examination, only paying the licensing fee. Included in this stipulation, the Technician's license would only be valid as long as she works for her current employer; if she leaves for any reason, her license would be null and void.

When I started working at the pharmacy, 32 years ago, I worked full time, as one of only three Pharmacy Technicians. After eleven years, I decided to decrease my hours, moving to part-time, in order to spend more time with my children. I currently have a thirteen year old at home who I want to be present for; I enjoy watching his sports after school and helping him with his homework. While I take pride in being an active part of my children's lives, I also take great pride in my work as a Pharmacy Technician; it is a central piece of my identity. At this time, I am working approximately 3 half days a week, which does not qualify me for the grandfather clause, since I have not worked 1000 hours in the past 12 months. I feel that I, along with many others in the state who work less than 20 hours a week, am being overlooked by this bill and its grandfather clause because of my lack of weekly hours. This bill does not take into consideration the amount of experience I, and the others like me, actually have.

I am currently studying for the Pharmacy Technician Certification exam, but I am finding that there are many things in this exam that do not pertain to what I do in my neighborhood pharmacy. For example, the exam includes learning requirements for working in a hospital pharmacy, which would not apply to my current position. At this point in my life, I am not looking for a change in employers, so the hospital section of the exam would be unnecessary.

My employer already has stated that if I do not pass the exam, I will lose my job, as I would not legally be able to work in the pharmacy, handle drugs, or help customers, like I do today. I do not have an issue with the State wanting to license Pharmacy Technicians, but I feel there should be a way to prevent the employee with years of experience who works limited hours from having to go through the examination process. I am asking that considerations be made to help people in my position.

The financial burden that the exam creates for employers and employees could be lessened by modifying the grandfather clause. The cost per employee for the study materials and examination is in excess of \$200, with the annual licensing cost on top of it. For many employees, this comes out of their personal paychecks. If employers paid this for every Pharmacy Technician, the cost would quickly add up, creating an unfair burden for the local, independently-owned pharmacies. Punishing these hometown pharmacies for keeping faithful employees would severely hurt their business. By modifying the grandfather clause, local pharmacies can continue to thrive.

In my 32 years as a Technician, I have seen the ways in which the drug industry has changed. I understand the inner workings of my pharmacy--something that takes more than just a year to learn. It requires years of experience, rather than a set number of hours, to build trust and credibility with regular customers. In a neighborhood pharmacy, customers become like family. I am able to identify their unique needs because I have spent time and energy building these relationships. Passing a licensing exam does not mean that a person intimately knows the workings of a specific pharmacy and the people it serves. My years in my pharmacy have educated me beyond what a test can measure. On the surface, not having worked 1000 hours in the past 12 months seems to say that I have little experience in this field, but when you consider that I have been doing this job consistently for 32 years, a different story is told.

I do not have the magic answer to what the grandfather clause should be but I feel the years of experience a person has should be considered and have some bearing on it. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



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cc: Senator Jones